

IN THE NEWS

C-141 Rodeo team hopes to leave its mark

By Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe
437 AW Public Affairs

From low-level airdrops to engine running off-loads, Charleston's C-141 Rodeo aircrew is fine-tuning its act for the May 6-13 competition.

Team members, all from the 16th Airlift Squadron, are Lt. Col. James Kirby, Jr., Maj. Michael Zech, Capt. Mathew Yaun, Tech. Sgts. Douglas Darnier and Gary Corley, Staff Sgt. Daryl Hillman and Senior Airman Jason Gray.

The team's loadmasters and primary engineer have been working with members of the aerial port C-141 team for the Rodeo engine running off-load and on-load event, which involves a cargo container and two Humvees.

"That's probably the hardest part of this Rodeo, for the enlisted crew," said Darnier, a loadmaster.

Other duties for the aircrew will involve basic flight engineering and scanning duties in the front of the aircraft, and loadmasters will conduct airdrop duties in the back, Darnier said.

The crew will be judged on airdropping heavy platforms, containers and troops during the Ro-

deo competition. They've practiced at several locations: North Field, S.C., an airdrop location in San Diego, Calif., Hunter Army Air Field, Ga., and Pope AFB, N.C.

Consistency is the key to doing well at Rodeo, according to Darnier.

"A lot of our tolerances are tighter," he said. "We try to do everything the same way, with fewer variances, to make everything more precise."

"I was on a Rodeo crew in '98 and I think we're equal to or maybe a little ahead of where we were two years ago, this late in training," Darnier commented.

"We've literally done dozens of low level airdrop missions and our times on target are averaging within five seconds almost every time," Yaun said prior to a mission earlier this week. "The drops are getting better as we go. So, we're making good progress."

The crew will also be judged on aerial refueling. "Aerial refueling is doing really well," Yaun commented. "We've had several good contacts and hopefully we'll get another couple today."

The Rodeo aircrew recently began working with the C-141 maintenance team, whose participation in Rodeo was not confirmed until last week.



Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe

Staff Sgt. Daryl Hillman (left) and Senior Airman Jason Gray, both loadmasters from the 16th Airlift Squadron, stow a ramp onto a C-141 after loading two HUMVEES onto the aircraft. The aircrew was practicing on-load and off-load techniques for the Rodeo competition.

They've also trained with KC-135 Rodeo aircrews from the 91st Air Refueling Squadron, based at MacDill AFB, Fla. The squadron is part of the 6th Air Refueling Wing, the 437th Airlift Wing's sister wing.

This year's Rodeo competition will be the last to include C-141s from

Charleston AFB.

"This is my first time representing Charleston, and the last one for us (C-141 aircrews)," said Hillman, a loadmaster. "So Rodeo will have special meaning. It will be nice if we can finish first or second in representing Charleston."

Merger

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should be business as usual. We expect the change to result in the best of both worlds."

During the ceremony, the guidons of the 437 EMS and CRS will be permanently cased by their first sergeants and the 437th Logistics Group commander, symbolizing the inactivation of their respective squadrons. The 437 Maintenance Squadron guidon will be uncased, symbolizing reactivation of the squadron,

and will be presented to Maj. Herb Phillips who will assume command of the new squadron.

"I'm looking forward to the opportunity to be a part of a great team of military, civilians, and reservists all working toward the common goal of providing unbeatable support to, not only the 437th Airlift Wing, but to the global airlift mission as well," said Phillips. "The merger team, made up of EMS, CRS, and other base agencies, has done an outstanding job of laying

the groundwork to take two already outstanding squadrons and seamlessly merging them into one."

Two flights of about 40 airmen, representing the inactivated squadrons, will combine into one flight and swap out their hats with ones that have the 437 MXS emblem on it.

While Phillips, currently the 437th Supply Squadron commander, assumes command of the new squadron, Maj. Rick Cornelio, 437 CRS commander will take over the 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron. The 437th Equipment Maintenance Squadron commander, Lt. Col. Anthony Williams, is PCSing to the Pentagon.

"The men and women of CRS should be pleased with all of their successes in supporting the wing mission," said Cornelio. "Their accomplishments, and those of the 437 EMS, have been many, both individually and organizationally. There is no doubt that as one unit both of them will only continue to improve the mission of the Logistics Group and our wing."

The office symbol for the new squadron will be LGM,

and the squadron will use the design from the 437 EMS patch.

Hagin sees no chance that the squadron will ever be split again. "Unless the C-17 Logistics Composite Model is radically changed, we will see less manpower in the years ahead as outsourcing becomes more prevalent in the future."

The 437 MXS will have nine flights, including a command section located in Bldg. 536, the EMS building. Other flights include Accessories, Aerospace Ground Equipment, Airlift Repair and Enhancement, Avionics, Fabrication, Maintenance, Munitions, Propulsion and Test, Measurement and Diagnostic Equipment.

The Accessories flight has three sections that work with electrical, environmental, hydraulic and fuel systems. The AGE flight handles all of the support equipment for the aircraft. The Airlift Repair and Enhancement Program repairs parts that are normally thrown away, but since 1994, have been able to salvage these parts at an annual savings of more than \$1 million. The Avionics flight

repairs communication, navigation and electronic warfare components on the wing's aircraft. The Fabrication Flight provides structural maintenance, corrosion control, survival equipment, non-destructive testing, machine and welding shops.

The maintenance flight handles home station checks for the C-17 and isochronal inspections for the C-141, aerospace repair and wheel and tire repairs. The Propulsion flight performs the HSC inspections on the engines and removes and replaces engines as needed. The TMDE flight calibrates and tests equipment used to troubleshoot aircraft malfunctions.

Williams sees good things in store for the new squadron. "The combining of EMS and CRS will facilitate the overall aircraft maintenance support to the biggest customer on base, the 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron," Williams said. "Both EMS and CRS touch the aircraft in various ways while providing the aircraft a critical launch platform for operational success. I foresee great things emanating from the 437th Maintenance Squadron."



Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith

Airman 1st Class James Schwickert, 437th Equipment Maintenance Squadron Wheel and Tire Section, takes apart the hub of a C-17 tire assembly as he prepares to service the tire. Though the merger will affect the units as a whole, it's not expected to affect the individual sections.